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# Social Progress



How Responsible Is the American Press?

# Social Progress

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*Department of Social Education and Action:* Clifford Earle, Margaret E. Kuhn, John H. Marion, Howard C. Maxwell, J. Metz Rollins, Jr., H. B. Sissel, Gayraud S. Wilmore, Jr.; Helen H. Harder (Editorial Assistant), Helen Lineweaver (Director of Washington Office). Address editorial correspondence to Clifford Earle, Secretary and Editor.

*Counseling Committee on Social Education and Action:* Malcolm S. Alexander, Leroy Anderson, Mrs. Roland P. Beattie, Mrs. Werner J. Blanchard, Mrs. Fred. J. Church, Joseph J. Copeland, Mrs. Albert L. Elder, David Freeman, Robert H. French, Theodore Gill, Edler G. Hawkins, George W. Johns, William Kirkland, Mrs. Horace C. Lukens, Kenneth McGilvray, Mrs. W. J. H. McKnight, Clinton M. Marsh, Hans Noll, John G. Ramsay, Mrs. Ben Russell, Wolfgang Stolper, Shelton B. Waters, Henry Lee Willet, Paul S. Wright (Chairman).

*The art work in this issue is by Tom Arthur.*

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FROM  
THIS  
VANTAGE  
POINT

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**I**N THIS issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS we talk about newspapers and attempt to suggest criteria by which the way they live up to their public responsibility can be measured.

Our daily newspapers continue to be the most important medium of mass communication in the United States. Second place, we believe, goes to the national weekly newspapers.

Television and radio have been doing a job of news reporting and interpretation that is mostly superficial and only occasionally significant and profound. The standard for radio seems too often to be the five-minute newscast, which turns out to be three minutes of breathless headline reading and two tedious minutes of commercials written by copy men who are determined to fill with words and words every second of available time time time. Recent hour-long television reports on Africa, however, are a sign and hope of a new level of public instruction. These are very expensive ventures, but if television can see its way to continuing and increasing the frequency of presentations of this kind, public awareness of the great issues will be greatly enhanced. And with that as a beginning who can tell the end?



It is remarkable how badly informed the American people are, and how little concerned, about public events. In 1955, nearly three years after John Foster Dulles became Secretary of State, a nationwide poll, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center of

the University of Chicago for the U.S. Department of State, showed that only 52 per cent of those interviewed could correctly identify him in his important cabinet post. In the same poll, 44 per cent thought favorably of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, 35 per cent were unfavorable, and 21 per cent were on the fence. In another survey, those interviewed were asked to indicate in which part of South America they thought Venezuela was located—the top, middle, or bottom third of the continent. Only 39 per cent correctly placed Venezuela at the top; the rest made a bad guess or had no idea at all. These studies and others leading to similar results raise grave questions about communications in America—the schools, the press, radio, and television.

The problem becomes confused and complicated when the polls reveal, as they do, that though a great many Americans seem to know little about matters of public concern, they often believe and support constructive public policies. For example, they do not know where Venezuela is located, but they believe that our Government should pay more attention to Latin America and should assist the countries south of us in education, health, and industrial development.



The first results of a survey of some of the leading papers of the United States, undertaken by the Department of Social Education and Action, are presented on pages 19 to 23 and on pages 24 and 25. The study began as a highly experimental and quite ambitious project several months ago.

What we really wanted to find out was this—Is there an easy way to evaluate and compare newspapers in terms of their social responsibility? The answer, for us, was no. A really adequate study would require much more time than we could give to it in the midst of an already too full office schedule. The survey proceeded far enough, however, to permit a general picture and some limited conclusions. These, we believe, are valuable.



We are proud to present the article by Robert H. Estabrook, of *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, based on an important address he made at the University of Michigan in December. This is an able and incisive criticism of the American press and a prescription of newspaper responsibility by one of the country's most highly regarded editorial writers.

The article by Edward W. Barrett and Penn T. Kimball, of Columbia University, is a much too brief excerpt of a paper they presented at the American Assembly at Columbia last fall.

—SEA Staff

# WHAT IS A RESPONSIBLE PRESS?

Address by Robert H. Estabrook, Editor, Editorial Page, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, December, 1959. Used by permission.

THE American press probably enjoys the most exalted status of any in the world. Its power and influence are enormous, despite what you may hear about real or alleged erosions of its position. By the breadth or inadequacy of its reporting the press can often determine the success or failure of a particular enterprise or man, and its comments can often change governmental or business policy.

Reporters and correspondents have access to officials of industry and Government in a way that makes many foreign newsmen drool, although many good reporters complain characteristically that it isn't enough. Even with the misguided efforts to classify or conceal information in Government, the access to sources of news is great. Lingering suspicions of the press do not prevent recognition of its importance.

Except, perhaps, for the kept minions of Soviet propaganda, American newspapermen are certainly the

highest paid in the world. Newspapermen have acquired social status somewhat higher than that denoted by the English butler when he announced a visit of "six journalists and a gentleman from the *Times*." The days have long passed, happily, when a reporter was supposed to subsist on \$15 a week and love of his job. If not all reporters behave like gentlemen, many of them can afford to live like gentlemen. Editors no longer have the lean and hungry look that caused them to be regarded as refugees from a misanthrope asylum. They and their reporters live in good houses, eat well, educate their children, belong to clubs, and in general act like prosperous members of an affluent society.

## Hard-earned Prestige

Now this exalted status has not been achieved without a great deal of hard work. The prestige of the press is built upon the conscientiousness, dedication, skill, and

independent-mindedness of thousands of individuals whose competence is the product of long hours of sensitive preparation.

And much of the prestige of the press is useful. An influential press can carry out far better than can an impotent press the functions of social criticism envisaged by the Founding Fathers when they provided for press freedom as a check upon government. Well-fed reporters can write just as well as emaciated reporters, provided that they do not lose their love of the profession or forget Mr. Dooley's advice to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Journalists with social status who call Cabinet officers by their first names can report the news and background better than can reporters without such intimate access, provided that they do not outgrow their independence and iconoclasm or become so used to having news handed them that they forget how to dig.

But with this exalted status and affluence have come some less desirable qualities. An arrogance, pomposity, and deception have often seemed to displace humility and simple devotion, and the result may well cause thoughtful critics to wonder whether the place of the press is fully deserved. Let me cite a few examples, a recent one first.

### **The Khrushchev Tour**

Three hundred reporters, Americans and foreigners, accompanied Mr. Khrushchev on his tour of the United States, and in many cities the number was swelled by several hundred more. (When I say reporters, I include representatives of maga-

zines, television, and radio.) They managed to write about what the Soviet Prime Minister said publicly, what he ate, what he wore, how his family and colleagues acted, what he said privately, and even what he thought. Much of this was important, and most of it was interesting.

But it was literally impossible for hundreds of reporters to see Khrushchev at any one time, much less to pick up his side comments. Members of the press often stumbled over one another in an attempt to get even a glimpse of the man upon whom they were supposed to be reporting authoritatively, and sometimes they ended by interviewing each other. In the process they managed to do some thousands of dollars of damage to a supermarket they invaded in California, and one brass-conscienced photographer even wondered why a butcher became excited when he was standing on the meat.

There are many explanations for this binge, and by no means all the blame rests upon the press. The State Department was responsible for some of the faulty arrangements or lack of arrangements, and the Soviet Embassy complicated things enormously by switches in the itinerary. But much of the problem was simply lack of restraint in the press. "We didn't cover the Khrushchev story, we smothered it," commented one correspondent. "We created the atmosphere of hysteria. We were not the observers of history, we were the creators of history." Interestingly enough, the man who made that comment represented the organization that had perhaps the largest force of reporters covering Khrushchev.

Of course it is easier to diagnose the malady than to prescribe a satisfactory cure. There is no simple way to accommodate such a mob, although pool arrangements and advance agreements among newspapers, wire services, and TV would help. What concerns me is that the press gets in its own way; and this was not the last of these carnivals. There comes a point at which the difficulties of the press influence the course of the event itself, and the press collectively contributes to a distortion.

### **The Case of Castro**

Indeed, a case can be made that this was part of the trouble with Fidel Castro in Cuba. After inadequately reporting the excesses of the Batista regime—and failing to make clear why it was unable to report them adequately—the press suddenly discovered Castro. He had carried on his activities in the mountains for several years without attracting much attention outside Cuba; then, all at once, everything he did became front-page news. How much this deluge of publicity influenced his own course and contributed to misunderstanding no one can say. But relations with the American press certainly have been a factor in Castro's relations with the United States. And we all ought to know by now how sudden publicity made the late Senator McCarthy and how he learned to make publicity and convert it to his own twisted ends.

### **Baited Questions**

Or take another related example. When Mr. Khrushchev appeared at

the National Press Club in Washington, some of the questions appeared intended more to bait and infuriate him than to elicit information. This is in keeping with the role of the press depicted by certain television interview programs, on which reporters appear more as prosecutors or gladiators seeking to discomfit or demolish an enemy than as persons seriously seeking news in the normal fashion. Perhaps it is the influence of the quiz show; the program has to undergo a certain amount of intellectual rigging to ensure its entertainment value.

Well, I don't think this sort of stereotype does the press much good. Of course the baiting question is an old technique and has its uses. But the press in its news functions is not the district attorney, and the public pillory was abandoned some years ago. The overuse of the baiting technique seems to me to proclaim an unbecoming arrogance akin to the incredible smugness of the Los Angeles newspaper that headlined its story about the Khrushchev objections to the remarks of Spyros Skouras: "Boasting of K Interrupts Skouras at Film Lunch."

### **Public Tastes**

Recently the press became very much exercised about morality when Charles Van Doren put on his show of contrition. The catharsis is certainly a good thing for the country, and I hope only that it will go far enough. We drastically need an overhaul of our standards of values. But there is little room for self-righteousness in this sort of moral reappraisal. The press has had its own part in the debasement of public

tastes, and some of the mud we were so gleefully flinging at TV stuck on our own hands.

We give an inordinate amount of space to entertainment, to comics, to articles on how to take off a girdle glamorously. We don't merely report crime news, as we should to inform the public; we often glorify it. We deplore violence on the editorial page and then pander to it in the comics and Sunday features. Some newspapers make a conscientious effort to screen their advertising, but others still print copy that is patently designed to fool the consumer about products of questionable value. Some seem to counsel a policy of "let the buyer beware" even though they would not have approved of it for the contaminated cranberries.

### Press Versions of Payola

We in the press too often have permitted our staff members to accept favors or junkets that in their net moral meaning are not very different from taking pay for publicity mentions. I don't mean that any respectable newspaperman would sell his soul for a cocktail or even a trip to Europe. Furthermore, I am happy that a number of newspapers, including the one I work for, enforce very strict rules on this sort of thing. But appearances are important, and it is the appearance of corruption that does the most damage to the press.

The airlines that offer free inaugural trips, the automobile manufacturers who offer cars at cut rates to newspapermen, and the industries that establish "honors" and "awards" for the press may be doing

it all for the love of humanity, but somehow I doubt it. Suspicious fellow that I am, I think that they are doing it because they want to create a "favorable" public relations climate. They would be insulted at the suggestion that they were attempting to buy the press, but the newspapermen who accept such private perquisites at least create a presumption that they are open to purchase.



What I am saying is that if the press is to criticize the moral tone of others, it must behave like Caesar's wife. Some newspapermen are accomplished free loaders. As a group we have an extra obligation, it seems to me, to look carefully at the course of our bonanzas, be it industry or Government. We ought to pay our own way. Free baseball passes or movie tickets may not corrupt the writers who make use of them, but the ethical rationalization under which such perquisites are taken is very questionable indeed.

It is not a very big step, really, from the habitual acceptance of

small favors to the acceptance of actual pay for publicity plugs and mentions. The television hearings brought out some pretty malodorous examples that involved individual members of the press. It has not been so long ago, either, that an investigation turned up a large number of active newspapermen in Illinois who, in one form or another, were on the state payroll. You can imagine how objective their reporting of state affairs was; even if they tried honestly to be objective, it would be very difficult to convince readers that their comments were not influenced by their source of extra-curricular income.

### Public Confidence

Once the public gets the idea that the press as an institution is corruptible, it will be in grave danger of losing what credence it commands. It will also be betraying the trust of the Founding Fathers and the first amendment to the Constitution. There are plenty of examples in foreign lands of what happens, not merely to the press but also to free government itself, when the press loses public confidence because it is regarded as venal.

To a very real degree in American society, the press is the guardian of public morality, along with the churches, schools, and universities. It has a large role in the shaping and stimulus of public taste. If the press is corrupt, or is regarded as corrupt, then ethical standards generally tend to decline. Horace Mann predicted the end of that rutty road when he wrote: "Let the public mind once become thoroughly corrupt, and all attempts to secure property,

liberty, or life, by mere force of laws written on parchment, will be as vain as to put up printed notices in an orchard to keep off canker-worms."

In short, we *ought* to be indignant about the ethical shortcomings of television or any other quasi-public institution. But our indignation would be better founded, and more credible, if we also managed to muster a few olfactory shudders about the garbage in our own back yard. Better yet, we might even try to clean it up.

### Deceptions

And then we have our own little deceptions that bear at least some similarity to the rigging we have been protesting. We sometimes pretend, through use of the dateline, that stories actually composed in the office were written elsewhere. This is probably not a cardinal sin if the reporter has really visited the country he is writing about and merely puts together and files his articles from the next stop; but the sanction is stretched pretty far when a reporter in the office makes a few telephone calls and then tries to write about an event that has happened, say, a hundred miles away in a story that will carry the dateline of the outlying hamlet.

We abet the use of the "overnight," an effort to rewrite a story that appeared the morning or afternoon before so that it will seem fresh and new even though it contains no additional facts. This is a little like putting day-old bread in new wrapping for the consumer; he may be attracted by the wrapping, but he gets the same bread.

We stage photographs unabashedly. We depict Mayor Zilch receiving an award from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Eggheads when everyone can see that the photograph was posed after the award. This is perhaps an innocent enough deception because the readers can see that it is deception; but it is nevertheless deception. Let me add, parenthetically, that it may be preferable to having the Mayor overrun by hordes of photographers popping flashbulbs and temporarily blinding His Honor.

We ourselves manufacture news. We make a practice of "rounding up" opinion on events. Reporters dutifully call up Senator Glotz to ascertain what he thinks of a speech by Mao Tse-tung. Glotz hasn't even heard of the speech and hasn't the foggiest notion of what was in it, but he will get his name in the paper and therefore complies with the ritual and gives his opinion. This opinion is about as valid as mine on the newest formula for space vehicle design, but of such are "news" stories made. We also occasionally manufacture news about our own crusades by playing them far out of proportion to the news value.

We fall for news manufactured by others. I have in mind not so much the staged publicity stunt, which sometimes ends by having a news value other than what was intended, but the carefully timed release. Publicity-wise members of Congress have learned that the news budget for Sunday night and Monday morning is sometimes dull. Therefore, if the legislator times a sensational report for Monday morning it is likely to receive far more attention than it

would on other days. Sometimes it receives considerably more attention than it is worth.

We frequently camouflage the origins of the news. We make reference to "high officials," "Administration circles" and the "well-informed source." Sometimes this sort of disguise is necessary to protect a source of authentic news who for one reason or another will not disclose it without assurance that his name will not be used. Sometimes the oblique reference reflects the background sessions in which Cabinet members and other Government officials meet with newspapermen on the understanding that their comments will not be attributed. Sometimes the anonymously based news story affords a launching vehicle for trial balloons. President Roosevelt was adept at this technique in giving reporters background items that he wanted to test on the public. He was equally adept at disowning and shooting down the trial balloons when they failed to orbit.

Now, this practice has its uses. If it sometimes enables Government officials to victimize the press for their own not always noble purposes, it also permits the reporter to get out important news that he might otherwise not be able to obtain or write. The very absence of a responsible source to which to attribute the news, however, makes more important the reporter's own sense of fairness and responsibility. Sometimes the "well-informed source" is genuinely that, but occasionally it may be nothing more than a colleague at the press club bar. The "well-informed source" ought to be viewed with the same skepticism as those other crea-

tures of the Indoor Bird Watchers, the red-eyed crosspatch and the double-breasted seersucker.

### Misleading Objectivity

And then consider some of our own sacred formulas for judging and processing news. Nothing is more revered than the old saw about the man biting the dog, or its modern version about the fireplug wetting the dog. That is why so many two-headed calves get on page one. But there is a much more sinister connotation. Under our doctrine of "objectivity," what a man says is news whether or not it happens to be true. When Senator McCarthy made wild charges we blew them up—even after we knew them to be untrue. We helped make the Senator, and we did not know how to deal with our own Frankenstein. Some few newspapers did try to get to the truth of the charges and place them in perspective with the full facts, but the atonement took a long time. Happily the false objectivity of the McCarthy era has come in for caustic comment by critics of the press and has stimulated some constructive soul-searching within the press itself.

In news conferences, particularly presidential news conferences, we sometimes inflate the words of the speaker beyond what we know to be their meaning. We write separate stories on virtually every comment of President Eisenhower, which sometimes gives them an importance far beyond what was intended in context. Former President Truman was asked in 1950 whether use of the atom bomb in Korea was being actively considered. He replied, unwittingly, that use of all weapons

was always under active consideration. The sensational press treatment of this fuzzy comment brought British Prime Minister Attlee quickly to Washington for a conference.

Of course the blunders are not always the fault of the press. Sometimes reporters try their best to bail out a Government official when he has plunged himself into hot water. In the last analysis he must be responsible for his own remarks and the interpretations they invite. But the newspapers in search of a lead sometimes take the comments far beyond their plain meaning.

We rigidly follow a formula of rewriting public speeches so as to emphasize what the reporter, sometimes with no knowledge of his own about the subject, thinks is the most important or sensational phrase. There is no more disconcerting experience than for an editor (or reporter) to see his own speech as reported. William Lyon Phelps often declined to make speeches because, he said, every speech involves four speeches: the one you intend to make, the one you actually make, the one you wish you had made, and the one reported by the newspapers. I myself am much attracted by the British system of reporting speeches. This usually consists of a one-paragraph factual lead followed by a chronological summary of what the speaker has said.

### Inflammatory Words

Stuart Chase once wrote a book entitled *The Tyranny of Words*, in which he dwelt upon the inflammatory characteristics of certain verbs and phrases. To say that a man "demanded" something or "insisted"

upon it is obviously quite different from saying that he "asked" it. Yet in order to add flavor and drama to our writing we have fallen into a habit of using "action" verbs that sometimes convey more action than actually happened. A speaker doesn't criticize, he denounces; he doesn't reply, he retorts, and so on.

The distortion process has probably been the most visible at international conferences and at the United Nations, where there has been a tendency to describe each day's events in football terminology: our side gains twenty yards, or the Russians throw us for a loss. It really isn't quite that simple. The distortion becomes the more severe when a reporter who doesn't know a foreign language attempts to interview a visitor from another country who doesn't know English well. As those of you who have studied French will recognize, the verb "demander" doesn't mean "demand"; it means "ask." When French visitors have been represented as demanding something they merely ask, the misunderstanding quite naturally causes bad feelings.

### Partisanship

There is sometimes a tendency for reporters covering a certain man or movement to become partisan about what he is covering, be it national affairs or a foreign government. Of course, the tendency is not confined to the press. It is acutely visible in some of the Government regulatory agencies that become champions of the industries they regulate—and I may add that coverage of the regulatory agencies, which make decisions affecting large segments of

industry and even national affairs, is very often indifferent or nonexistent except for the trade press.

Obviously reporters can't be monks, though I think they ought not to be avid joiners either. Moreover, they can say with a good deal of justification that they have merely been emulating the examples set by their journalistic superiors who become actively involved in political campaigns. Of course reporters and editors have a right to hold and express their opinions, and the editorial page has not only a right but a duty to comment on the merits of particular candidates or parties as it sees them. But I sometimes wonder how much faith readers place in the objectivity of a newspaper's coverage when the publisher or editor or reporter is participating personally in the decisions of the Republican or Democratic parties.

One of my colleagues has evolved what he calls the doctrine of reportorial noninvolvement. By this he means that the reporter ought to take special pains to avoid identifying himself with the person or movement he is covering. There is a saying attributed variously to the late Frank Symonds or to the late Samuel Blythe to the effect that there is only one way for a newspaperman to look at a politician, and that is *down*. We need not take quite so severe a view to understand that when a reporter or editor becomes a politician he is no longer a good reporter or editor.

### Double Talk

And then there is the little inconsistency often found on the editorial page of demanding a cut in expenditures and almost simultaneously

whooping it up for some pet project. I was reminded of this recently when an extremely conservative Republican editor who tends almost to view the postal service as socialism argued vigorously for a new Federal project on behalf of local commerce that would cost hundreds of millions of dollars. I suppose we all do this in one form or another, but it is especially conspicuous in papers that frequently moan about taxes and oppressive government. The captious critic can quite properly ask that we either face up to the cost of what we are advocating or shut up about taxes. But of course we can always respond with a convenient definition of the boondoggle: an expenditure of public funds in someone else's circulation area or Congressional district.

### **Inadequate Coverage**

Among the gravest of the inadequacies of the press, however, is the sheer deficiency of coverage of many areas of local, national, and world affairs. We have awakened to science with a capital *S*, for example, but it strikes me that we really have not managed very well to explain what the scientists are driving at. Some of this deficiency results from the sheer complexity of the subject and the lack of education about science among newspaper readers generally. Nevertheless, in many respects scientists talk a totally different language, even in symbols, and work on an intellectual plane far removed from that of the society as a whole.

Perhaps the difficulty of communication here is inevitable because of the highly advanced specialization of the scientist as contrasted with

the generalism that we prescribe for most good newspapermen. Some science writers have done an exceptionally good job of becoming proficient in the objectives and vernacular of science and in translating them into understandable terms for the layman. Nevertheless, I am concerned about the inadequacy of communication, for it seems to me that there is a danger in a democracy when an important group becomes withdrawn and its work lies beyond the comprehension of the public at large. Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer stated the dilemma for newspapers well when he said: "Nearly everything that is now known was not in any book when most of us went to school; we cannot know it unless we have picked it up since. This in itself presents a problem of communication that is nightmarishly formidable."

What applies to science coverage also applies to many areas of cultural activity generally. Even many areas of governmental affairs are only sketchily covered. We do a better job, broadly, with local news than with state or national news. But it is physically impossible, within space limitations, for most metropolitan newspapers to do a good job of covering the suburbs along with the central city. There simply is not enough space or general interest to warrant presentation in detail of the debates of the Hamtramck city council. Some newspapers attempt to provide expanded coverage in special suburban sections; others attempt to condense the essential suburban news. But adequate suburban coverage presents a real dilemma for larger papers. The net result is to

stress the importance of community newspapers.

There are altogether too many instances in which even larger papers attempt to cover a state capital with a single man. Even if the papers depend in considerable degree upon the wire services for supplementary coverage, the wire bureaus also are limited. This system leaves very little opportunity for independent digging.

The same situation applies in many areas of the national Government. Despite the concentration of reporters in Washington, some agencies receive only scant and spasmodic attention. The plain fact is that Government is so big that no present-day news staff could do a fully competent job of covering all the news about it; and if a staff somehow managed to provide such coverage there wouldn't be room to print it. All of which emphasizes that the criticism of information officers in Government agencies is often silly. They are for the most part a help to the press in providing data that the press, for lack of manpower, might otherwise miss.

And of course the problem is even more stark in foreign countries. It is absurd even to pretend that one correspondent can cover an entire country. Yet there are newsworthy countries of the world today in which there is not even one full-time American correspondent. Sometimes the effectiveness and objectivity of wire service coverage is diluted further by the practice of making the reporter a salesman of the service, thereby placing him under an injunction not to offend anyone for fear of losing clients.

## News Distribution

Add to these problems the mechanics of news distribution. Many smaller newspapers throughout the country receive only a very abbreviated budget of telegraph news. In many instances it is all that they can afford or all that they have room to print. But how can we expect the people of Lost Valley to be really informed about what is going on in Washington or Moscow or Havana when all they receive *in toto* is a couple of columns of wire news?

I don't know the answer. Perhaps all that it is reasonable to expect of smaller or medium-sized papers is a digest of the news, intelligently capsulized. Perhaps the people in such communities ought to supplement their news background with regional papers. Perhaps they have to depend upon other media such as television, radio, and magazines. What worries me, though, is that with either a scarcity of information or with a flood of unassorted information Americans in many instances are not getting a full and clear enough view of the alternative courses before them as a people. To provide the basis for intelligent public decisions is as much a problem for national leadership as for the communications media, but it is one that ought to concern all good citizens and particularly newspaper people.

## Technological Limitations

There is also the matter of mechanical limitations. Despite some recent innovations, newspaper printing is at root a terribly complex and archaic process. It shows little of

the ingenuity of television and radio. Our technology is barely in the automobile age, let alone the space age; and we have in our own industry some inexcusable examples of the featherbedding we deplore editorially elsewhere. Here again I don't know any quick answers. Perhaps substantial improvements will be possible in some of the new techniques for eliminating hot type, or in the further development of facsimile for quick relay and distribution, or in new devices yet in someone's brain. What I do know is that the printed word has a number of permanent advantages over any other form of dissemination of information; yet the cumbersome manufacturing process by which the written word is transformed into type places severe handicaps upon the quick and intelligent presentation of news and comment.

We might as well acknowledge that at the very best we can cover and present only a small part of the potential news. What we present is determined by newspaper economics and technology, by the availability and convenience of the information and, of course, by our own enterprise and editorial judgment. We may hope that what we present will be the most significant part of the news, and we may hope that readers and critics will excuse our deficiencies. But the inadequacies of our performance are sufficiently glaring to warrant a discreet humility. Too many of us in the journalistic profession suffer, corporately and individually, from thin skins. We would all benefit from more criticism—candid and informed criticism.

### A Responsible Press

So far I have been talking about what I regard as shortcomings of the press in the hope that these would illustrate some of the areas of press responsibility. What, then, is a responsible press?

Someone has said that no country can afford more than one "responsible" newspaper. Surprisingly, perhaps, I agree with him in the sense that "responsible" too often is con-



strued as apologetic. A newspaper that regards responsibility as requiring that it mince words, refrain from rocking the boat, shun controversy, talk about the sins of Afghanistan rather than those in the back yard, or avoid embarrassing the local political administration or the State Department—such a newspaper is not really responsible at all in my book. It has no more independence than a pet Irish setter.

But responsibility need not and should not imply either passiveness or timidity. Obviously a newspaper

that is conscious of its obligations to the public will first of all itself be a good citizen in local, national, and world affairs. Obviously it must be aware of the consequences, not merely legal but also social and moral, of what it does or fails to do. Just as obviously, however, it cannot carry the whole weight of the world upon its own shoulders. It must understand that it is not the Mayor or the Governor or the Secretary of State or the President, and it must not confuse its role. It must understand that full publicity and vigorous independent comment are the basic purposes of its existence, and that an essential part of its function is to be a scourge to corruption, inertia, incompetence, and false values no matter what the immediate embarrassment.

My own version of a responsible press as we complete the sixth decade of the twentieth century contains a number of elements, which I have listed here, not necessarily in order of importance and with no attempt to be inclusive:

**1. A responsible press will recognize the quintessential importance of full information, presented as completely, as fairly, and as brightly as it knows how to do.** It will recognize that the facts do not always speak for themselves, and that the apparent facts are not always the real facts. It will attempt to place the facts in perspective through interpretive stories, guarding at the same time against pandering to its editorial opinions in its news columns. It will acknowledge its mistakes candidly. It will constantly experi-

ment with new techniques of presenting the news in more readable, comprehensive, and intelligible form. It will recognize that responsibility and integrity are no barrier against wit, charm, and graceful writing.

**2. A responsible press will fulfill its opinion function by providing informed, provocative editorial comment.** This is my particular end of the profession, and perhaps I may be pardoned a few digressions. James B. Reston, of *The New York Times*, said recently that only two voices have been heard above the singing commercials—Harry Golden, of North Carolina, and Harry Ashmore, of Little Rock. I should like to think that the literary lung capacity of the editorial page is a little stronger than that, and I think that it is. Nevertheless, there is something to what Mr. Reston says. Many of the country's editorial pages are so curtailed by inhibitions, prejudices, sacred cows, economic stereotypes, blind political partisanship, and plain bad writing that they make up a pretty dismal chorus.

A good editorial page will have a credo of principles through which it speaks to its readers. It will give them an opportunity to talk back through letters to the editor. It will vary its tone, speaking neither in a sustained whisper or a sustained scream. It will guard against prefabrication, flannel-suited opinions that soon become flannel-mouthed opinions. It will be receptive to new ideas and will question old concepts. It will cherish its independence and will be wary of a narrow and automatic conformity. It will avoid be-

coming the mouthpiece only of particular segments of the society, and it will recognize the inconsistency between fair comment three years out of four and partisan atavism at election time.

A good editorial page will always seek simplicity and readability, but it will shun the notion that it has to be flippant in order to be read. It will combine vigorous comment, when vigor is called for, with restraint and an explanation of its reasoning. It will deal in persuasion rather than in pre-emptives. It will retain a prudent doubt of its own omniscience, and it will not be dismayed when others share that doubt. It will recognize that as its readers become better educated and face more competing demands upon their time it will have to add something meaningful to their understanding in order to maintain their interest.

**3. A responsible press will have a soul.** It will understand and convey through its own behavior the abiding truth that newspapers are more than mere "businesses," even though they must be successful businesses in order to fulfill their broader obligations. It will scrutinize its own performance in the light of what William Allen White wrote thirty-four years ago about the late Frank Munsey:

"Frank Munsey, the great publisher, is dead.

"Frank Munsey contributed to the journalism of his day the talent of a meat packer, the morals of a money-changer, and the manners of an undertaker. He and his kind have about succeeded in transforming a once-noble profession into an 8 per

cent security. May he rest in trust."

It will also take to heart, perhaps even while rejecting the generalization, the more recent criticism of the London *Economist*:

"Most of the present generation of newspaper owners have not been newspapermen themselves and as a general rule take much less interest in the newsroom than in the advertising and accounting offices. The result is that editors and reporters are no longer fired by the traditional ambition to get all the news first and best or perish in the attempt. The profession has become safe, stodgy, and standardized. Editors have apparently ceased thinking of themselves as the consciences of their communities and pride themselves instead on being businessmen."

**4. A responsible press will do more than merely mirror the society as reflected in the daily news budget of tragedies, failures, and accomplishments.** It will recognize the aspirations of the society, seek to influence them for what it believes to be the public good and, by its own force as an educational medium, help to raise the level of culture.

**5. A responsible press will be suspicious of power in all forms, public, and private.** It will respect dissent, and it will avoid becoming identified with favorites. It will understand that a good newspaperman must be willing to see the misadventures of his best friend portrayed on the front page. It will demonstrate to readers through its own performance why freedom of the press is a public protection rather than a

proprietary right. It will regard its relations with readers as a trust. It will welcome suggestions for improvement and encourage criticism.

**6. A responsible press will understand that in the competition with electronic journalism it must provide a depth of background that is not provided elsewhere.** It must do, in the words of Barry Bingham, of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, "what television cannot or does not do." It will recognize that television is a superior entertainment medium, and it will aim at more than a repetition of the five-minute newscast. It will welcome innovation. It will adapt its search for more effective methods to the knowledge that some of the pressure of immediacy has been removed by other media that can get news flashes out faster. It will look carefully at techniques such as that developed by *The Wall Street Journal* for succinct treatment of run-of-the-mill news combined with exhaustive treatment of particular subjects of local, national, or international importance.

**7. A responsible press will concentrate upon better training of its reporters and editors.** It will insist upon more adequate background in the social and physical sciences and in languages. It will seek to buttress news skill and specialization with general awareness and understanding. It will recognize the need to attract more competent young people into newspaper careers through better pay, faster promotion, and a less ritualistic employment structure.

**8. A responsible press will remember the Eleventh Commandment: Thou shalt not take thyself too seriously.**

Much of what I have said at such length was summed up by Herbert Brucker, of the *Hartford Courant*, when he wrote that "there are at least three things that the newspaper must do: (a) rethink its mission in today's world; (b) modernize its editorial methods to match; and (c) revive the underlying moral purpose of journalism." I think that we have a basically responsible press today. I think that it has shown many broad improvements in method and content over the last fifty years. I think that it still has a long way to go in view of the demands of the times for a citizenry more alert and better informed than ever before. The responsibility of the press is the heavier because the relentless pressure of newspaper economics is consistently reducing the number of competitive papers and placing upon the survivors the added public obligations of monopolies.

Both the mastodon and the dinosaur, which are no longer with us, were quite remarkable animals in their day. They failed, however, to adapt themselves to a changing environment, and neither their size nor their power saved them. We in the press have an advantage over them in that we can help to shape our own environment even while adapting to changes in it. But there is no survival without change. The only way for us to ensure that the public will continue to find the press as important and indispensable as we think we are is constantly to find new ways of justifying public confidence.

# FORTY NEWSPAPERS AND WHAT'S IN THEM

IT SHOULD not be news to anyone that newspapers vary widely from city to city across the land. They sometimes exhibit spectacular differences in the attention they give to various kinds of news, in their reporting of significant as over against sensational stories, in their interpretation of current happenings.

Several months ago, staff members of the Department of Social Education and Action raised the question of how important categories of news were being handled by the papers in certain parts of the country. For example, do the news media of some cities maintain a virtual blackout of information about the work of the United Nations and its agencies around the world? Are there regions in which the people whose opinions are shaped largely by what they read in the newspapers cannot be expected to think straight about foreign aid or organized labor or India or farm problems because

the papers either neglect these subjects or misrepresent them by the kinds of stories they publish?

We had a hunch that some parts of the country were poorly served by their newspapers—particularly with respect to news of developments and issues in the crucial field of international relations. But we could not say so, or even suggest the possibility, without knowing more about how the opinion-making papers across the land were fulfilling their public responsibility. And we could be wrong.

### No Studies Available

So we decided to get the facts. This meant, first of all, discovering what was being done by way of analyses of newspapers in the United States. We were confident that schools of journalism in our major universities and other agencies interested in news would be making or would know about studies of the sort

we were looking for. We knew, for example, that the public information section of the United Nations had been making a day-by-day analysis of press coverage of the UN in selected countries, including our own.

What we quickly learned was that no current studies of the kind we wanted were available. At least none of the schools of journalism with which we were in touch (and we did not miss many) was engaged in a continuous analysis of the American press. An occasional master's thesis included a survey of a limited aspect of the problem. But none of these studies, and none made by other agencies, was continuous or comprehensive enough to fill our bill of needs. Even the United Nations, in an economy move, had terminated its survey of press coverage of UN news.

### **The "Influential" Papers**

Our correspondence with deans of schools of journalism across the country had encouraged us to proceed with some kind of analysis of American papers. We were warned, however, that a really meaningful study of the sort we intended would be expensive and difficult in terms of sheer man-hours of painstaking and often dreary labor—reading, measuring, classifying, comparing, analyzing every story in scores of papers. We heard of a project similar to the one we were hoping to launch which ran through a \$30,000 appropriation before the survey was half finished. It was clear from the start that whatever survey we undertook would be limited in size and scope by the time we could give to it in a very busy office. Our project

would have to be fitted into an already tight schedule of office assignments. As it turned out, sometimes weeks could pass in which no progress could be made at all. But once we got the program under way, we had a bear by the tail and could not let go.

An early decision of great importance had to do with the selection of newspapers to include in the survey. One of the schools of journalism had ventured to suggest a list of the ten "best" newspapers in the country. We asked deans of several other schools of journalism to comment on the list and to give us the names of other papers they regarded as among the best. We were not exactly surprised to discover that there was considerable disagreement among the "experts" as to the ten best papers of the land. Over thirty papers appeared on the various lists they gave us.

We realized, of course, that "best" and "effective" were not identical categories so far as newspapers are concerned. Our survey should deal with both. So from other sources, we were advised as to the most influential papers in various parts of the country. In this way we developed a list of nearly one hundred newspapers—far too many for us to analyze in an initial and limited study. So we kept on writing to people, and finally came up with a list of forty newspapers.

The list we developed is not to be regarded as "the forty best" or as "the most influential" of the land. The list, as we look at it now, is a very good one, as far as it goes, but there seem to be some omissions that could be serious. No papers are in-

cluded, for example, from such important cities as Boston, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Houston, and now Anchorage and Honolulu. Perhaps the list should have included at least one paper from every state. The most that we can say for the present list is that it includes most (or practically all) of the leading newspapers of the United States.

The list we developed was confined to daily newspapers published



in our larger cities. It did not cover farm weeklies or weekly news magazines. It included one national paper (*The Christian Science Monitor*) and thirty-nine local or regional dailies.

### Categories of News

We subscribed to the papers, to all forty of them, for a period of two weeks. The tally was 560 newspapers, including 80 bulky Sunday editions. Our mailman was cheerful and uncomplaining, but he was glad when the two weeks were over.

The next step was to set up the

categories we would use in analyzing the papers. We kept in mind our purpose to discover, if we could, the extent to which papers in different parts of the country were faithful in reporting various kinds of socially significant news as over against sensational and trivial stories. We finally came up with the following:

Accidents and Catastrophes, Ads, Alaska, Alcohol, Business and Finance, Citizenship, Civil Liberties, Communism (International, Domestic), Community, Crime, Culture, Education, Features, Health, Housing, Housing (Discrimination), Human Relations, International News (Disarmament, Immigration, Foreign Policy, Refugees, Trade, Treaties, U.S.A.-U.S.S.R.), Investigations, Juvenile Delinquency, Labor and Economics, Mass Communication, Miscellaneous, Natural Resources, Personalities, Politics (National, State, Local), Race Relations, Religion, Science, Sex, Social Welfare, Sports, United Nations, Washington Proceedings.

A survey form was designed and mimeographed to be used in recording the column inches of material, under each of the categories we had set up, in one newspaper.

It should be said that later, when the chart on pages 24 and 25 was prepared, the original forty-four categories were grouped as follows: (1) accidents, catastrophes, crime; (2) business, economic developments, finance; (3) community problems, education, housing, health; (4) human relations, civil liberties, race; (5) international relations, United Nations, foreign policy; (6) politics, Washington; (7) sports; (8) miscellaneous.

## **Papers, Pages, Columns, Words**

The actual, tedious work of the survey was done by several members of the office team who gave time to it as they could in the midst of other pressing duties over a period, several times extended, of many weeks. The project was supervised by Florence Ridgely with the able assistance of Margaret Sheneman. Others doing yeoman service were Metra Spalvins and Li-Wen Chang.

We soon discovered that from three to five hours of time were required to go through one issue of a paper—reading and classifying everything in the paper, measuring the column inches of all material including features (comics, fiction, health hints, fashions, and so on) and ads, and tabulating the results. This meant that it would have taken well over two thousand secretarial hours to analyze the stacks of papers in our work room. We did not have that much free time (free from other duties, that is) in our understaffed office, and we could not bring in extra help. So we limited the study to selected days, chosen on the basis of news breaks in the two-week period during which we had subscribed for the forty newspapers involved in the survey.

The results are summarized in the chart on pages 24 and 25. The papers are grouped on the basis of geographic regions. The chart presents certain general data: size of the paper in terms of both page size and number of pages, the amount of space devoted to editorial matter, and the featured columnists. This listing is confined to selected nationally known news analysts and

commentators. Then follows the distribution of the news into the eight categories described above. The tabulation includes both column inches and percentages under each heading. The analysis represents a single issue or edition of each newspaper. We believe that the figures, within the limitations we shall try to point out, provide a basis for a useful comparison of the newspapers with one another.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The principal shortcomings of the survey are rather obvious:

1. We already have suggested that several (perhaps many) more papers could have been included in the study to give us a fairer picture of the behavior of the press in different parts of the country.

2. The survey as here presented makes no distinction between significant news and trivia. This could be especially important in the category of international news.

3. The categories we used were somewhat overlapping and, in one or two cases, ambiguous. Some stories could be classified under both economics and international relations. Accounts of James Hoffa's troubles could have been assigned to any one of three of the original categories—labor, investigations, and personalities.

4. The original tabulation differentiated between front-page stories and those appearing elsewhere in the papers. As here reported, however, this distinction was not taken into account. An analysis of front pages would have provided another basis for comparing papers—perhaps a better approach than the one used.

5. Our survey was somewhat abortive in that it did not get down to analyzing and comparing the accounts in the various papers of selected news items of national significance. It was evident that the papers differed widely even in the use they made of wire service stories (AP, UPI, Reuters, and so on). Very few papers are able to use more than a fraction of the words that come in over the wires, and their selection of material for publishing is a key to editorial responsibility.

6. The analysis did not include features such as fashions, health hints, fiction, comics, society news. This seemed a reasonable omission.

7. Editorials, including the contributions of news analysts and commentators, were not contained in the analysis beyond a mere listing of the space devoted to this material and of the names of leading columnists. A useful supplement to the present survey would be a study of editorial pages.

### What the Chart Reveals

A number of general comments can be made:

1. One of the initial concerns of the study was the responsibility of the press in its handling of news in the field of international relations. A glance down the appropriate column of the chart shows that the Atlantic coastal states and the Great Lakes region were served considerably better by their major papers than were the Great Plains states or the Pacific Coast. There were exceptions, of course.

2. Several papers (*The Evening Bulletin* of Philadelphia, *The New York Post*, the two Chicago papers,

and *The Detroit News*) vied for dubious top honors in the amount of space they gave to sensational items. An interesting and instructive exercise is to compare the amount of space a paper gives to international news with the amount it gives to accidents and crime. Local circumstances, of course, greatly affect the latter category. A sensational murder or an airplane accident would merit a great deal of space in the papers of the city or area where it happened.

3. *The New York Times* and *The Christian Science Monitor*, each in its own way, set a standard for responsible reporting of news of national significance. The chart suggests that several other papers appear to be doing very well in serving the public—*The Sun*, of Baltimore, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, *The Milwaukee Journal*, *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, and *The Spokesman-Review*, of Spokane. The latter three are smaller but seem to be exceedingly well balanced in their coverage. Undoubtedly other papers could and should be added. These evaluations are subject, of course, to the survey's limitations and are, to that extent, quite tentative.

4. The data developed in the survey lends itself to further analysis along a number of lines. For example, one of the questions we raised at the beginning of the study had to do with the attention given to news about the United Nations and about farm problems. It is possible that a further report can be made of the treatment of these and other subjects in the forty papers involved.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

## DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS\*\*

NEWSPAPERS	Pages per Paper	Inches per Page	Editorial Inches	Columnists,* 2/4-10/59	Accidents, Crime, etc. Pages %	Business Economics Finance Pages %	Human Relations, Civil Liberties Pages %	International Relations UN Pages %	Politics, Washington, etc. Pages %	Sports Pages %	Miscel- lanous Pages %		
											Pages %		
The Providence Journal.....	32	172	154.0	WSW	150	9.0	484 29.1	69 4.1	59 3.5	123 7.5	238 14.2	430 25.8	112 6.7
New York Herald Tribune.....	34	174	145.0	JA, RD, DL, WL, RSA, MC, DF, SP JR	12	.5	1094 49.7	24 1.1	73 3.3	179 5.5	179 8.1	435 19.8	98 8.9
New York Post.....	72	75	82.5	MC, DF, SP	395	51.6	24 3.1	66 8.4	55 7.6	44 5.6	28 3.5	94 12.0	73 9.3
The New York Times.....	60	172	119.5	JA, MC, DF, DL, RM, DP, IR	79	2.4	1649 49.7	262 7.9	137 4.1	377 11.3	319 9.6	258 8.1	228 7.0
The Evening Bulletin (Phila.)	54	172	313.0	JA, MC, DF, DL, RM, DP, IR	434	30.7	423 29.9	76 5.2	112 7.9	136 9.7	197 13.9	36 2.5	
The Philadelphia Inquirer..	42	176	155.5	RD, RCR	142	9.6	440 29.8	78 5.5	146 10.0	95 6.5	440 29.8	134 9.0	
The Atlanta Constitution.....	28	172	163.0	CLA, RD, DP, JR, WSW	125	8.4	516 34.0	44 3.0	64 4.3	77 5.1	191 12.8	344 23.0	134 9.2
Jacksonville Journal.....	28	176	165.0	WP, SP, RR, GES JA, MC, DF, WL, DP, WP, SP	70	7.9	94 10.5	235 26.2	19 2.1	52 5.8	49 5.5	274 31.0	96 10.8
The Nashville Tennessean ..	42	176	352.0	JA, MC, DF, WL, DP, SP, WP	72	7.4	189 17.8	129 12.3	59 5.5	91 8.6	137 12.9	322 30.4	64 5.9
The Times-Picayune (New Orleans).....	42	176	149.0	DL, WL JA, MC, DF, WL, DP, SP, WSW	72	5.7	252 20.0	63 5.1	24 1.9	120 9.5	128 10.1	420 33.2	187 14.9
St. Petersburg Times.....	48	170	177.0	JA, MC, DF, WL, DP, SP, WSW	187	12.5	125 8.3	341 22.8	52 3.5	128 9.4	79 5.3	433 28.9	149 9.0
The Sun (Baltimore).....	30	168	136.0		22	2.1	252 22.0	41 4.0	10 1.0	162 14.8	184 16.9	336 31.0	115 10.6
The Courier-Journal (Louisville).....	28	168	163.0	JA, DL, DP MC, DF, WL, SP, IR, JH	107	6.9	330 21.5	136 8.8	53 3.5	79 5.1	205 13.5	401 26.0	230 15.0
The Louisville Times.....	30	172	240.0		166	12.8	205 15.9	188 14.6	44 3.4	148 11.6	180 13.9	258 19.8	114 8.1
The Washington Post & Times Herald .....	40	178	217.0	JA, MC, RD, WL, DP, GES	101	4.9	428 20.5	216 10.2	79 3.8	357 17.0	263 12.6	430 20.6	216 10.4

Tribune . . . . .	1/6	186.0	DF, WL, JR, WSW	84	3.0	283 22.0	70	3.4	43	7.1	43	147	12.3	232	13.4	264	20.3	146	11.4	
The Des Moines Register & Moorhead News . . . . .	24	180	147.0	MC, WL	92	6.4	352	24.4	155	10.7		85	5.2	116	8.0	398	27.6	253	17.5	
The Fargo Forum & The Kansas City Star . . . . .	18	176	138.0	MC, DL, SP RD, JH, DL, JR, WSW	139	15.0	60	6.5	67	7.3	8	1.0	42	4.5	217	23.4	308	33.0	81	8.8
The Kansas City Times, Lincoln Evening Journal . . . . .	32	176	149.0	DF, DL RSA, RD, DL, WL, RM, SP	215	17.1	236	18.8	28	2.4	27	2.5	74	7.1	183	17.5	220	17.5	114	9.1
St. Louis Globe-Democrat . . . . .	28	176	124.0	DL, SP, IR, RCR, GES	101	9.8	147	14.3	116	11.3	8	.7	60	5.4	164	15.9	292	28.4	140	13.6
St. Louis Post-Dispatch . . . . .	52	176	228.0	JA, MC, DF, WL, JR	83	5.9	352	25.4	67	4.8	14	1.0	78	5.7	188	13.5	440	31.7	164	11.8
Albuquerque Journal . . . . .	26	170	83.5	RM	90	13.8	28	4.2	65	9.5	8	1.3	25	3.8	129	19.7	142	22.0	166	25.7
The Dallas Morning News . . . . .	38	172	138.5	RM	71	4.7	344	23.0	268	17.6	36	2.5	118	8.0	189	12.8	258	17.2	209	14.0
The Tulsa Tribune . . . . .	52	172	157.0	DL, WP	103	6.5	324	20.7	156	10.0	7	4	46	2.9	222	15.8	482	31.0	214	13.6
The Denver Post . . . . .	48	176	212.0	JA, MC, DF, WL, DP, JR, WSW	179	10.6	228	13.6	49	3.0	19	1.2	120	7.2	159	9.7	480	29.0	439	26.5
Great Falls Tribune . . . . .	16	160	25.5	WP, GES	111	10.1	185	16.8	101	9.2	21	1.9	74	6.8	341	30.8	160	14.5	110	10.1
The Salt Lake Tribune . . . . .	28	172	154.0	MC, DL, RM, WSW	149	14.5 <sub>b</sub>	173	16.7	55	5.3			105	10.1	132	12.8	236	22.9	180	17.4
Los Angeles Times . . . . .	72	172	292.0	WL, RM	140	6.6	562	26.3	316	14.9	29	1.4	95	4.5	178	8.4	430	20.3	368	17.3
Oregon Journal (Portland) . . . . .	28	172	172.0	RD, DL, DP	187	7.2	191	15.7	215	17.7	4	3	53	4.3	154	12.6	310	25.5	199	16.4
San Francisco Chronicle . . . . .	34	170	144.5	DP, SP	205	11.1	379	20.4	165	8.9	25	1.3	75	4.0	153	8.2	690	37.2	167	8.9
The Spokesman-Review (Spokane) . . . . .	18	172	129.0	DF, WP, JR	129	12.0	127	11.8	51	4.9	13	1.2	133	12.8	157	14.7	258	24.1	208	19.3
The Christian Science Monitor . . . . .	16	168	168.0			2	.2	348	31.5	48	4.3	5	.4	399	36.2	99	9.0	128	11.0	
																		59	5.5	

\*CLA (Charles L. Allen), RSA (Robert S. Allen), JA (Joseph Alsop), MC (Marquis Childs), RD (Roscoe Drummond), DF (Doris Fleeson), JGH (Jay G. Hayden), DL (David Lawrence), E. Sokolsky, WSW (William S. White)

\*\*For one day. Percentages based on total column inches of news in the eight categories in the distribution. Features (fashions, society, etc.) and editorials not included.

By Edward W. Barrett  
and Penn T. Kimball

# Latin America in the News

The American Assembly, sponsored by Columbia University, is an annual academic conference for the study of crucial problems before the nation. The 1959 Assembly, held last October, was devoted to our country's relations with Latin America. One of the important presentations, by Dr. Edward W. Barrett, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism, and Dr. Penn T. Kimball, Professor of Journalism, Columbia University, dealt with the role of the press and communications. The following portions are used by permission of the American Assembly.

**T**ODAY the average educated and articulate Latin American is far better informed about the United States than is the comparable North American about Latin America. The score or more excellent newspapers in the other Americas feature large quantities of news about the United States—most of it news supplied by the two great North American news services. The additional scores of fair-grade newspapers—and the radio and television stations—generally give greater proportions of their output to news of world affairs than do comparable media in the United States.

In this country, the case is far different. With a few notable exceptions, newspapers give relatively little space to news of the world and minute space to news of the other Americas. Whether this be cause or

effect, the level of interest in and knowledge of Latin Americans among even educated United States citizens appears shockingly low.

This brings us to what Herbert Matthews has outlined as the vicious circle of Latin-American coverage; the reader will not read or listen to Latin-American news because he is neither informed nor interested in it. The newspapers, magazines, and broadcasters will not give Latin-American news because they believe their clients do not want it. The failure to provide the news perpetuates the ignorance of the reader, and this ignorance leads to the lack of interest.

The most stinging indictment of United States press coverage of Latin America comes from the editor and publisher of *Editor & Publisher*, the leading trade magazine of the news-

**LATIN AMERICAN COVERAGE IN THREE CITIES—OCTOBER 8, 1958 and APRIL 8, 1959**

	Total Col. In. Editorial matter	Col. In. Foreign	% Foreign	Col. In. Latin	% Latin	Col. In. "Substantive" Foreign	% "Substantive" Foreign	Col. In. "Substantive" Latin	% "Substantive" Latin
<b>LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY</b>									
(m) The Courier-Journal	2126.6	256.5	12.0	15.0	0.7	239.8	11.3	10.3	0.5
Oct. 8.....	2265.0	92.3	4.1	0	0	76.8	3.4	0	0
(e) The Louisville Times									
Oct. 8.....	2058.1	237.3	11.7	31.5	1.5	93.4	4.5	27.1	1.3
April 8.....	2131.8	221.9	10.4	51.4	2.4	144.7	6.8	40.6	1.9
<b>KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI</b>									
(m) The Kansas City Times	1748.5	256.6	14.7	11.0	0.6	189.2	10.2	7.9	0.5
Oct. 8.....	2225.0	393.6	17.8	23.3	1.1	285.4	12.8	21.8	1.0
(e) The Kansas City Star									
Oct. 8.....	2404.7	374.8	15.6	40.8	1.7	165.4	8.5	30.8	1.3
April 8.....	2099.8	334.9	15.9	45.1	2.1	166.9	7.9	36.4	1.7
<b>PORTLAND, OREGON</b>									
(m) The Oregonian	2149.5	316.6	14.6	5.5	0.3	213.9	9.9	0	0
Oct. 8.....	2308.4	260.9	11.3	21.4	0.9	173.2	7.5	13.4	0.6
(e) The Oregon Journal									
Oct. 8.....	2496.6	284.0	11.4	8.3	0.3	123.8	4.9	1.0	0.04
April 8.....	2301.3	268.1	11.6	11.2	0.5	169.5	7.3	11.2	0.5
Average:.....	2192.9	274.8	12.5	23.7	1.1	167.7	7.7	16.7	.76

Col. In.=Column Inches.  
 "Substantive" refers to topics dealing with politics, economics, social affairs, diplomacy, etc., as opposed to crime, disaster, entertainment, sports, and trivia.

paper business. Robert U. Brown, in the issue for January 31, 1959, devoted his whole column, "Shop Talk at Thirty," to the problem:

"It now seems to be unanimous that U.S. news coverage of the Cuban revolution left something to be desired. Criticism by various U.S. editors centers around erroneous reports of a Batista victory over the rebels during the last few days of December.

"In fairness to the reporters who were present it should be noted that Cuban censorship under Batista was pretty tight. It probably accounted for some of the difficulty in getting at the truth. But some of the blame should come right back to the newspaper editors who are now doing the complaining, with a few exceptions.

"In general, they are the ones who have had a continuing lack of interest in legitimate news from Latin-American countries. They have ignored most of the solid news about Latin America that has been delivered to them over the wires because they have felt their readers were not interested.

"There haven't been enough Latin-American news specialists to cover the whole area so that good reporters, but inadequately trained in language and customs, have sometimes been assigned only when seemingly 'hot' stories develop."

To the practical problems enumerated by Mr. Brown—censorship, newspaper editors' lack of interest, a shortage of adequately trained reporters—most publishers would certainly add at least one more: the high cost of covering an area as large and as complicated as the twenty American republics.

### **The Role and Problems of the Wire Services**

There are 1,761 daily and 546 Sunday newspapers in the United States, plus 3,663 radio and 512 television stations. Coverage of Latin America, except in a handful of cases, is provided for these outlets principally by the two great news-gathering wire services—Associated Press and United Press International, both of which also service several hundred Latin-American clients.

Each receives 5,000 to 10,000 words a day on the Latin-American desk in New York City. Only a fraction of this flow, however, goes out on the wires to North American clients.

### **Requirements for Understanding**

If the nation is to have the kind of public understanding that will prompt and support intelligent policies toward Latin America, two requirements seem inescapable:

1. The thoughtful, articulate segment of the population must be at least broadly informed about the other Americas. This need not involve a detailed knowledge of geography or of the names of the heads of all Governments. It does involve comprehension of the importance of the other Americas, some feeling for their backgrounds, cultures, and sensibilities, and some knowledge of political, economic, and social trends.

2. The small minority of true opinion leaders across the nation should be able to keep themselves informed about current developments and trends in the Americas.

Neither of these goals is likely to be achievable in a nation whose newspapers and other news media generally neglect Latin America.

The compilations of public opinion survey findings suggest that, while there is profound public ignorance of Latin America, there is latent interest in the area and a through-the-pores sense that the other Americas are of great importance to this nation. The right kind of reporting and presentation of news might well awaken the subsurface interest.

The appreciable audience that has a genuine interest in the area has not written to applaud good report-

ing or to condemn bad or nonexistent coverage. Those who know something and want to know more of Latin America could do much to break the vicious circle by expressing their approval or disapproval to the news media.

The press has a responsibility to lead as well as to follow the aspirations of its audience. And this can be practical as well as right. If Americans are capable of becoming better informed about Latin America, someone must provide the opportunity. The history of our press is rich with examples of audiences that awaited only the chance to be cultivated.



CHURCHES approach the public press with mixed motives. The minister and church officers usually realize that it is important to get news about their church into the newspapers. Some churches consider their missions successfully accomplished when they have secured the co-operation of editors and reporters for regular church publicity. Other church leaders habitually criticize the press and righteously denounce the headline treatment of scandals, crimes, and trivia. It is true that many of these criticisms are well founded and essential to express, but responsibility for a responsible press goes far beyond such limited objectives.

To work constructively for a broader and more responsible news coverage and editorials demands a dynamic relationship between churchmen and newsmen, especially the men who make newspaper policy. It also involves reaching some understanding of the problems editors and publishers face, and clearer thinking about the role of the Christian community in encouraging and supporting the efforts of the press to act in the public interest. Here may be places to begin:

1. Send copies of this issue of *SOCIAL PROGRESS* with a covering letter to the editors and publishers of local papers. In the letter the following points might be stated: (a) the

fact that the church recognizes the essential role of the free press in a free society; (b) the desire of the church to do its part in developing more responsible readers who will show sensitive interest in what is happening in the world. This communiqué could lead to an interview.

2. Interview local editors and publishers and find ways to continue a friendly, mutually stimulating relationship. Even if the minister knows these men in terms of "the good publicity they give the church," the relationship needs to be established as a broader basis of the church's outlook and ministry to the world. In any initial interview it is important to establish that the church is not asking for some favor or privilege and that it is standing *with* the newsmen in trying to assess daily events at home and abroad. William Allen White once pointed out that "the newspaper is an 8 per cent business." It exists to make money, and news gathering and dissemination cost a great deal of money. The starry-eyed who forget these economic factors are not helping the press or the causes they embrace.

3. Analyze and evaluate local newspapers according to the factors described in Mr. Estabrook's article.

4. Inquire what newspapers are available in local libraries, and what books and periodicals deal with cur-

rent economic, social, and political developments.

5. Ask about the reading habits of local high school students and what the schools are doing to teach young people to read newspapers with some discernment. Such knowledge would seem to be even more important than learning to drive a car or to run a typewriter. Enlist the public schools in long-range plans to build up intelligent readership of the news.

6. Form the habit of reading and writing letters to the editor, pointing out possible bias of a news story,

giving some background on current issues, or stating other sides in a controversy.

7. Become a regular reader of *The New York Times* and acquire broader knowledge of issues and events, more discriminating standards in appraising the virtues and weaknesses of local papers. The Sunday *Times* with its wonderfully concise and well-rounded summaries of news of the week costs thirty-five cents a copy (out-of-town rate). The daily *New York Times* costs ten cents a copy to out-of-town readers.

## HOW TO READ A NEWSPAPER

John Mackay, former president of Princeton Seminary, frequently observed to seminarians that the sensitive Christian goes into the world with the Bible in one hand and the daily newspaper in the other. Man's response to God's action is informed by Biblical perspective and understanding of contemporary events. In an excellent publication *Get More Out of Your Newspaper*, Theodore M. Bernstein, assistant managing editor of *The New York Times*, gives some explanations of how *The Times* assembles and edits the day's news and how *Times* readers can form good newspaper-reading habits. The following excerpts are used by permission.

### Why You Should Read Newspapers

If there were no great news-gathering organizations to furnish information, present-day life would be not only difficult but impossible. Information and communication form the strong warp holding together the fabric of our common affairs. Without them we would be the victims of rumors, of alarms, of gossip. Our knowledge of current happenings would scarcely extend beyond the circle of our family and close neighbors. And it would be unreliable knowledge, at that.

Information has a way of getting

distorted by inexpert ears and inexpert tongues. Your newspaper gathers and presents information to you in a responsible manner.

Why do you need information? The reasons range from trivial ones concerning your own well-being to major ones that relate to the role of the citizen in a democracy.

### Some Kinds of Information Affect Our Day-to-day Lives

When a new law is passed, when a new tax is imposed, when a public

emergency test is scheduled, when an official ceremony is planned, it is obviously impossible to notify each citizen individually. Yet it is expected that he will know of these things. So far as law is concerned it is a well-known doctrine that ignorance is no excuse. To keep abreast of public matters that affect him personally, the individual naturally turns to the press.

### Some Kinds of Information Affect Us in Our Occupations

To the businessman, the professional man, and the worker, newspapers supply information that they must have. Has the price of wool gone up? Has spending by the public been curtailed? . . . Court decisions and new laws are required reading for the attorney, reports on new books for the writer and the publisher, accounts of educational activities for the teacher. The worker must know what unions are doing, how the trends of pay and living costs are moving, and what the new developments are in the field of workmen's compensation. All these kinds of information are provided by the newspaper.

### Many Remote Events Eventually Come Close to Home

When a speedboat roars down a lake, the rollers from the wash in time will reach the shore. A swimmer or a canoeist close to land will feel nothing as the speedboat streaks by, but seconds or minutes later the waves will rock him. Many news events behave the same way. Remote either in actual distance or in their apparent influence, they ultimately come to have a bearing on our lives.

A destructive plague of locusts strikes the Middle East, laying waste to grain crops. It seems like none of our affair. But the day after the news becomes known the prices of futures in the Chicago markets go up. The traders know that if a substantial part of the world's total grain output is lost, what is left will be in greater demand and therefore prices will rise. Months later we may find that we have to pay more for meat, poultry, bread, and everything in any way related to grain.

### The Whole Theory of Democracy Presupposes an Informed Citizenry

To solve the manifold and often complex problems that confront the Government—and hence you as an indirect participant—you require information. It is not enough to know the arguments on both sides; you should also be acquainted with the facts that will enable you to test the arguments and form opinions of your own. Your newspaper brings you those facts.

A well-rounded newspaper like *The New York Times*, which makes



the supplying of information its main reason for being, gives you a balanced picture of the world. A newspaper that considers its chief function is to divert you may give you only a partial and therefore distorted picture of the world. Are the world's activities confined to crime, scandal, violence, and play? Obviously not. Yet from some newspapers you might get that impression. Those things are, of course, part of the pic-

ture, but they are by no means the whole of it.

To be thoroughly informed, you require a presentation that is comprehensive and that puts all things in proper proportion. The serious newspaper tries to give you this kind of full and balanced picture. Like a sensitive radar apparatus, it scans every corner of the globe constantly—twenty-four hours a day—to apprise you of what is happening.

### What Editors Do for You

Reading a newspaper the size of *The New York Times* cannot be made as easy as reading a handbill.

What *The Times* has to do is to try to satisfy the interests of as many different kinds of readers as it can. It therefore attempts to make all stories as complete as their importance and the general interest in them warrant and as the available space permits. This of necessity produces a fairly voluminous paper. The editors are conscious of this and there are various things they do in processing, organizing, and displaying the news to make reading easier.

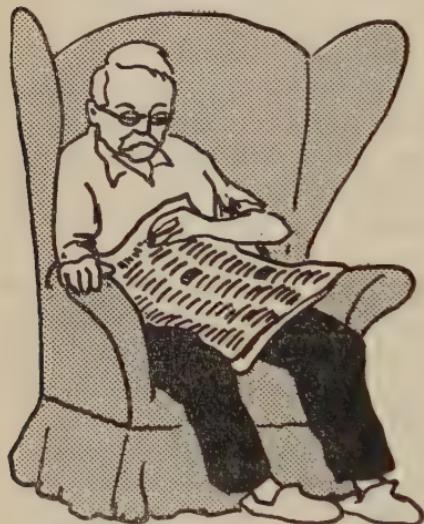
A piece of fiction usually begins at the beginning, takes up things in the order in which they happened, reaches a climax, then ends. The pattern of most news stories is almost the reverse. The news story begins by condensing the climax—that is, the important thing that happened. It tells this in a single paragraph or just a few. It then proceeds from there, often presenting the facts in descending order of importance, so that the least significant ones appear at the end of the story.

Begin with page one, the show window of the newspaper, where the best goods are displayed. "Best" may mean most important or most unusual or most interesting or merely most readable. The emphasis that a newspaper places on one or another of these qualities in making its selections for page one determines the character of that newspaper. A sensational paper will tend to stress the unusual, the interesting, the readable, and care little for the important. *The Times* puts first emphasis on the important, but by no means neglects the other qualities.

Column 8 on the front page is reserved for the leading story, and the size of the headline it carries indicates the weight the editors attach to the particular piece of news. The second most important piece of news is placed in column 1, unless it is in some way related to the leading item or falls into the same broad category of subject matter. An effort is made to group stories that lie in similar fields. For example, if the leading article is one that bears on international relations, foreign news will be placed close to it; two or more politi-

cal stories will be put in the same part of the page; items of local interest will appear together.

This deliberate arranging of the news on the front page is designed to introduce an element of orderliness and of organization into the presentation of the disparate happenings of the day. The purpose, of course, is to help the reader find his way and organize his own thinking about the news.



The same theme of organization continues right through the paper. Related stories appear close to one another and, so far as is possible, the news is grouped according to general classifications, like foreign news, national news, crime news. The sizes and shapes of the news spaces available on the various pages and the great speed that is necessary in putting the paper to press do not permit perfect or complete classification. But a surprisingly high degree of classification is actually achieved.

Certain features of the paper have fixed positions. The News Summary and Index always appears on page

one of the second section weekdays. Obituaries are always on the next to the last page of the first part of the paper, and the editorials always appear on the page before the obituaries. And on the page before the editorials are the book news and the crossword puzzle. The financial and business pages are always placed in the second part of the paper. Television and radio programs and news can always be found on the next to the last page.

The News Summary and Index can be of great assistance not only in locating features of the paper but also in obtaining a rapid preliminary view of the day's news preparatory to reading in greater detail. Here the reader will find the contents of the paper classified by broad categories—"International," "Government and Politics," "Industry and Labor," "Education and Welfare," "Financial and Business," "Sports," and so forth. Most of the entries under each category are brief and written in the crisp language of the headline, each carrying the number of the page on which the story is printed.

The editors see to it that each story contains enough information about earlier events and about the persons involved so that you can pick up the thread of the narrative at once. For readers who have been following the particular story from day to day or month to month some of the material will be repetitious, but the repetition usually is not unwelcome because details are easy to forget when there are so many of them in so many different stories.

At times backgrounding of spot stories requires more than a mere

rehearsal of prior events. In such instances a situation story will be published. Such a story may contain no spot news whatever, but confine itself to outlining a situation that either has produced or is likely to produce spot news.

The most extensive backgrounding is supplied in the Sunday paper.

The Review of the Week section not only brings you up to date on what has happened in the last seven days, but also offers analyses and interpretative articles by expert correspondents. Moreover, *The Times Magazine* provides still more and still broader background material supplied by special writers.

## How You Can Help Yourself

It may take you as much as an hour to obtain a good grasp of what is going on. Perhaps an hour sounds forbidding, but the hour need not be in one piece.

Let us suppose you can spare only fifteen minutes first thing in the morning. How, then, should you proceed to get a quick view of the news?

*First:* Read every headline on page one to get some idea of the day's major happenings. This will take you less than a minute.

*Second:* Turn to the News Summary and Index on the first page of the second section of *The Times* and read it through. This condensation covers everything except the relatively minor articles in the news. Day after day it gives you an orderly, crisp presentation of the contents of *The Times*. Reading it through will take you about five minutes. It will give you much more information, cover a far greater range of subjects than a five-minute radio or television broadcast, and it will put the news picture in perspective, which a newscast usually cannot do.

*Third:* Devote the remaining nine minutes or so to moving through the paper page by page. Look at every news page, glance at the headlines, examine the pictures. As you leaf

the pages advertising will probably catch your eye because that is what it is intended to do, and advertising can sometimes be news too. It can tell you something about new products; it can indicate the current level of prices and, hence, the cost of living.

As you go through page one, the News Summary and Index, and all the pages of the paper you should take mental note of the stories that you wish to read a little about and the stories that you wish to read a great deal about. Then when you take up the paper later in the day your reading will be made easier.

To start the more extended reading period, it would be well to read all or a substantial part of every page-one story. These are the stories, you recall, that the editors considered the leading items of the day, and the editors have sifted through all the rest before deciding.

Naturally, you will not be able to read everything in the paper. In fact, it would be foolish for you to attempt to do so. The editors do not work on the assumption that everything is going to be of interest to everybody. What they are trying to do is, rather, to satisfy the interests of all classes of the paper's readers.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## *In the Churches*



**Where do you stand? Should the Government of the United States unconditionally repudiate the use of mass extermination as a means of waging war?** That this is an issue very much alive among seminarians is indicated by a recent communication from the faculty of the Theological Seminary, University of Dubuque, Iowa. The faculty has developed a document entitled "A Statement Concerning the Use of the Means of Mass Extermination in the Waging of War." Copies of the statement have been sent to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and others under the date of January 12.

The following is the full text of the statement presented for your earnest consideration. SOCIAL PROGRESS would welcome comments and reactions from individuals and groups.

In view of the fact that the Government of the United States has not yet repudiated mass extermination as a method of waging war, we the undersigned, members of the faculty of the Theological Seminary of the University of Dubuque, confess the following truths:

1. God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ as the loving Creator, Preserver and Redeemer of human life.
2. Jesus Christ is at once God's Word, which assures us of life in him and which commands us to do all to preserve the life of our neighbor.
3. For the preservation of the life of the

neighbor for whom Christ died and rose again, God has appointed the state with the task of providing for justice, freedom, and peace by means of the threat and exercise of force. In the fulfillment of this task the state may, as a last resort, wage a domestic or foreign war.

4. But the threat and exercise of the means of mass extermination in waging war is blasphemy against God the Creator, Preserver and Redeemer of human life, and is sin against the creature for whom Christ died and rose again. It defeats the very purpose for which war may lawfully be waged, and a state that employs such means becomes (in this respect) a nihilistic state by the indiscriminate destruction of the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, the defenseless and the armed, the living and those not yet born.

5. In modern times the state of Adolf Hitler revived and perfected the barbaric horror of genocide whose military counterpart is war by obliteration of defenseless civilians, e.g., the bombing of Warsaw, Rotterdam, and Coventry and the annihilation of Lidice.

6. The initial horrified reaction of the United States and its allies to these crimes gave way during the years of fighting to the acceptance of Nazi policy. Pin-point bombing of exclusively military targets was followed by saturation bombing of whole cities. Napalm, jellied gasoline, enabled us to make raids in which women and children were roasted alive.

7. The perfecting of the atom bomb provided us with a diabolically efficient instrument for waging war by the extermination of whole civilian populations.

8. Although the war's outcome was not in doubt, we dropped this bomb on two Japanese cities, immediately killing more than 100,000 men, women, and children and maiming thousands of others not only then living but in generations yet unborn.

9. Even before Soviet Russia possessed the atomic bomb, we relied principally upon the threat of massive retaliation, that

is, nuclear mass extermination, rather than upon the conventional weapons of war, in pursuit of the policy of containment.

10. Moreover, since Nagasaki we continued to maim others both living and yet unborn by numerous tests of nuclear weapons with a callous disregard for the rights of neutral nations.

11. Meanwhile Russia and other nations have developed, or will develop, these weapons and are relying upon our policy of mass extermination in waging war.

12. There is, however, no conceivable end that justifies these means—neither the salvation of the West with what is here called Christian civilization, nor the salvation of the East with what is there called the achievements of the socialist revolution.

13. "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." (Gal. 6: 7.) All men and nations who follow the policy of war by mass extermination provoke the wrath of God and his just retribution, whether they deny him or whether they profess their worship of him.

14. Nevertheless, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1: 9.) We therefore confess our sin and the sin of our people to Almighty God and to the survivors of those whom we have wantonly destroyed. We further confess that we as Christians have been shamefully weak and tardy in this our confession of guilt.

15. As "fruit that befits repentance" (Luke 3: 8), we declare that we can no longer support the Government's policy of the threat and exercise of the means of mass extermination, whether nuclear, chemical, or biological. We cannot sanction the production, testing, and application of the means of mass extermination, nor can we approve of any military service that involves the use of such instruments of warfare.

Signed:  
David I. Berger  
Donald G. Bloesch  
Arthur C. Cochrane  
George B. Ehlhardt  
Robert M. Healey  
Joseph L. Mihelic  
C. Howard Wallace

**"Farming out" specific social problems** for study and analysis is proving to be an effective pattern of organization for judicatory SEA committees. Most recent judicatory to adopt this procedure is the Synod of Iowa.

The synod's Committee on Social Education and Action, after determining the areas needing attention during 1960, assigned these areas to presbyteries for appropriate study. The reports of the presbyteries will be used by the synod to give guidance to its work in the respective areas. The following assignments were made:

1. Pilot situations on presbytery education related to SEA to the Presbytery of Southwest Iowa.
2. Relating social education and action to students and faculty to North Central Presbytery.
3. Race relations to Des Moines Presbytery.
4. Marriage laws and pornographic literature to Northwest Presbytery.

**When members of the Women's Association** of the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Wilmington, Delaware, met recently, they heard one of their members say: "Now we want to think about some of the social problems in our community. We will present a skit calling to our attention six problems: migratory labor, disarmament, problems of the aging, juvenile delinquency, gambling, and alcoholism. We are in dead earnest about these problems, but we are sugar-coating our pill. These are serious problems, but we don't want

you to go home weighted down by the weight of the world, so we have put in a few laughs. For example, when we speak concerning disarmament, one of our ladies dresses up in a soldier's suit. Now when a woman puts on a man's suit, she looks funny —so laugh. And if the actors in the skit do well, applaud. We know we're never quite sure whether to applaud in church or not, but for this program, please do."

Then there followed the presentation of the skit entitled "Six Soliloquies About Social Problems That Beset Us All," written by one of their members, Mrs. Walter L. Tindall, Jr. Six actors representing respectively a migrant, a soldier, an elderly lady, a teen-ager, a gambler, and an alcoholic skillfully introduced the issues for consideration. The migrant, dressed in farm clothing, sat at a table writing a letter home in which he tried to tell about the meager existence of a migrant and the terrible living and housing conditions. Not certain just how much he wanted to tell the folks back at home, the letter was never written. Members of the Women's Association who were present that day came to a new understanding of the migrant problem and their responsibility for it.

Similarly, each problem was dramatically presented: a soldier grappled with the problem of disarmament, a senior citizen of seventy-two years searched for a new purpose in life, a young girl stepped on stage and shared a heart-rending moment of life that revealed the complexity of the problems of juvenile delinquency, a housewife was jolted by some revealing facts concerning

gambling in her town and set out to do something about it, the pathos and tragedy of a life for which drinking was a life belt that turned into a millstone focused attention upon America's No. 3 health problem.

Each issue was presented with particular reference to the local manifestation of the problem. Here is an idea that can be readily adapted to any local situation.

**Teamwork for Healing**—A more effective ministry to sick and troubled persons, both in soul and body, is the aim of an expanding program of the Texas Medical Center's Institute of Religion. The Institute features a dual program: to medical students and to the clergy. Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish clergymen lecture to the medical students on the details of their respective faiths so that the future doctors may collaborate in aiding the spiritual as well as the mental health of their patients. Graduate students in theology study medicine, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, observe operations, and spend five to seven hours daily as chaplain-interns, counseling the sick and their families under strict supervision.

Construction has started on a four-story, \$600,000 building in Houston, Texas, to house the Institute of Religion. Part of the Institute's new structure will house a large outpatient clinic for ambulatory patients desiring counseling. Since its inception four years ago, the Institute's program has provided training to 139 medical students, 373 nursing students, 80 graduate theological students, and 112 pastors.

**Here is one way to make General Assembly pronouncements come alive!** As a first step toward implementing General Assembly pronouncements at the local church level, the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, Takoma Park, Maryland, held an open meeting for the purpose of determining the attitudes of the congregation concerning General Assembly's resolutions on social issues.

The following issues were discussed and approved by the following votes: full voting rights of all citizens—unanimous; laws against housing discrimination—32 to 17; no racial bar to church membership—37 to 4; no “right to work” law—18 to 7; abolition of capital punishment—15 to 5; education as to alcohol problems—23 to 3; repeal of laws against contraceptives—25 to 1; commendation of UNICEF—unanimous.

The information developed at the meeting will provide the basis for a continuing program of education and action. Walter H. McClenon is the chairman of the SEA Committee of the church, of which Mr. O. Thomas Miles is pastor.

**For Women Only!**—Awards are being made annually by the National Safety Council to recognize and reward women's achievements toward the preservation of life through traffic safety programs in the community or state. Known as the Carol Lane Awards, they are designed to inspire women to help reduce traffic accidents and make our streets and highways safer for all.

Nominations for awards totaling \$5,250 in U.S. Savings Bonds are accepted from individuals, women's or parents' clubs, or similar volunteer women's organizations. The nominations may be entered by the individual, by the club president, by the chairman of the project, by an affiliated organization, or by any other organization. A booklet of case histories of former award-winning projects, including information on “How to Organize a Traffic Safety Project,” is available upon request. For literature and further information concerning the Carol Lane Awards for Traffic Safety, write to: Secretary to Board of Judges, Carol Lane Awards, National Safety Council, 425 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11, Ill.

# About Books

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**The People and the Court**, by Charles L. Black, Jr. The Macmillan Company, 1960. 238 pp. with index. \$5.00.

**The Supreme Court in a Free Society**, by Alpheus Thomas Mason and William M. Beaney. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 346 pp. with index. \$6.50.

Here are two fascinating and important studies of the role of the U.S. Supreme Court, the first written by a Yale professor of jurisprudence and the second by two Princeton faculty men in the field of jurisprudence and political science.

*The People and the Court* (by the Yale man) is an analysis of the functions of the Court, emphasizing its significance as "the final legitimating agency of every governmental act within its scope." As such, the book deals primarily with the relationship between the Court and the legislative activity of the Congress and the states. The author does not hesitate to declare his adherence to the institution of judicial review —believing that the task of upholding, or validating, legislative measures that are consistent with our Constitution is no less important than that of invalidating governmental actions on the grounds of unconstitutionality.

*The Supreme Court in a Free Society*, on the other hand, emphasizes

and documents how the Court has been "an active, effective participant in our political processes." The authors cite examples of how major decisions of the Court were influenced by external developments, and how in turn some of its decisions exercised decisive influence beyond the immediate scope of the decision itself. Mason's and Beaney's study pictures the Court as a contributor to the governing process, not suspended above it as an uninvolved judge in the classical sense. This emphasis is in contrast to that of Black's.

At a time such as the present when the Supreme Court is, in a sense, a "controversial" subject, both roles are important to the understanding of anyone with an interest in public affairs.

**Your Vocational Adventure**, by Jesse C. Burt. Abingdon Press, 1959. 203 pp. with bibliography and index. \$2.95.

Pastors counseling with young people about the choice of a "vocation" (assuming they have got to the point of looking upon "vocation" in the theological sense as the "calling" to be a Christian) will find this book helpful. Written by a layman with fifteen years' experience as an educator, part of which was spent as a vocational counselor to high school students and Air Force personnel, *Your Vocational Adventure* gives clues to help analyze interests and

capabilities, job possibilities, salary expectations, ways of job hunting and of getting an interview.

The reader should not expect any profundities, but this is a good "how to" manual.

***A Neighborhood Finds Itself***, by Julia Abrahamson. Harper & Brothers, 1959. 370 pp. with index. \$5.00.

Pastors and residents of deteriorating neighborhoods would do well to read this book. It tells the story of how the citizens of a once-proud neighborhood united to save it from becoming a slum. Forty residents of the Hyde Park-Kenwood area on Chicago's south side, belatedly aroused to action by unmistakable evidence of spreading blight in their community, appraised their neighborhood and launched an organized effort to create pride, assimilate newcomers, renew their area. The dramatic story is told by the person who was in on the movement from the beginning and who later became the director of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference.

This book should help end both defeatist pessimism and rosy optimism about the renewal of a community. It should also provide some practical tools necessary to any group that seeks to accomplish such renewal.

***The Compulsion to Confess***, by Theodor Reik. Farrar, Straus & Cudahy, Inc., 1959. 493 pp. with notes. \$7.50.

Consisting of material written by Reik as early as 1925 this volume

(subtitle: "On the Psychoanalysis of Crime and Punishment") is the third of a series that began with *The Search Within* and *Of Love and Lust*.

*The Compulsion to Confess* consists of three parts. Part One, "The Unknown Murderer," looks at the unconscious compulsions of murderers and detectives in analyses of famous American and European crimes. Part Two, "The Compulsion to Confess," deals with this compulsion as a determining agency not only in criminology, but also in religion, art, myth, and language. Part Three, "The Shock of Thought," analyzes the unconscious connections between hate and fear, sexual urge and guilt feelings, revenge and forgiveness. A concluding postscript "Freud's View on Capital Punishment" is a short paper that Freud asked Reik to write.

Sample quote: "The reproduction of a joke and our laughter at it are . . . among the unconscious confessions. Freud showed us that we know neither what we actually laugh at nor what suppressed impulses we confess to in the joke."

***The Image Merchants***, by Irwin Ross. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1959. 288 pp. with index. \$4.50.

From the pen of a reporter for *The New York Post* comes this series of articles, some of which appeared first in the *Post* and *Harper's Magazine*, about the men who project for public vision the images they are paid to create.

It differs from Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders* in that it treats a more narrow field—the men and agencies themselves, who they are,

how they operate, their concepts of ethics, the kind of life they lead. Ross's major contribution is that he has got out for public gaze the public relations men whose business is to get headlines for their clients, and whose biggest mistake is to get themselves into the headlines.

The book has been widely reviewed and needs little treatment here, except perhaps for additional urging that it be widely read.

***Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine***, by Alvah W. Sulloway. The Beacon Press, Inc., 1959. 257 pp. with index. \$3.95.

Few Protestants realize that most of the legislation forbidding the dispensing of contraceptives or information about contraceptives probably was Protestant in origin. In 1873 the Comstock law shaped the course of the controversy over birth control. It prohibited the use of the mails to disseminate birth control information and "other obscene" material. It was passed largely because of the lobbying zeal of Anthony Comstock, a representative of the Society for the Suppression of Vice—a Protestant. State laws followed. The Roman Catholic Church got into the act later . . . fifty years later, in fact.

***Birth Control and Catholic Doctrine*** traces the history of laws against contraceptives and then examines against this background the position of the Roman Church as set forth in its own statements. The author believes that this church has got itself into a logical cul-de-sac on the birth control issue and candidly documents why.

Mr. Sulloway is a lawyer, and has prepared in this book what almost amounts to a careful brief. In the current heat of controversy over birth control in the light of the "population explosion," this book deserves the reading of every Protestant concerned about the subject.

***Political Man***, by Seymour Martin Lipset. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1960. 432 pp. with index. \$4.95.

The author of this important volume is professor of sociology at the University of California in Berkeley, and soon to be visiting professor in political science at Yale. His book is "a report on what we know about the conditions and operations of democracy in the modern world."

A major portion of the book is devoted to a systematic correlation of key elections and the forces operating upon groups of people to influence their voting. Christians will find particularly revealing the relationships Mr. Lipset finds between religion, class, and political behavior. For example, it is not by chance that American political parties have always divided along class lines, and still do—with the two major exceptions of the one-party South and the long allegiance of American "intellectuals" to the Democratic Party.

Another interesting conclusion of the book is that democracy as a political system is associated not only with certain developments of wealth and education but also with monarchy. Most of the world's stable democracies are, in fact, kingdoms. The study concludes with an examination of democracy in trade unions.



Dear Sir:

I have read with interest the series of articles on the various aspects of the Middle East problem contained in your November, 1959, issue. I note, however, that errors of fact have crept into these articles to which I would like to call your attention and that of your readers.

In the article entitled "Tensions in the Middle East" on page 8, you state that the Arab refugees "remember that Mr. Ben-Gurion, Israel's prime minister, is said to have described the present Jewish state as forming only '80 per cent of Western Israel.'" I do not think that this is a matter of "remembering" but a determined attempt on the part of Arab leaders to impress upon the refugees false statements, incorrectly attributed to Israeli leaders, or misquotations out of context. This is the sort of statement frequently attributed to Mr. Ben-Gurion in Arab propaganda leaflets; but a check of the alleged sources proves that in an article prepared for publication in the *Israel Government Yearbook* for 1951-1952, Mr. Ben-Gurion merely made the factual statement that "Israel was established in part of Eretz Israel (Palestine)." This statement no more shows expansionist tendencies than does the similar factual statement that "the United States forms part of the North American continent."

This same article concludes with the statement "And Israel must give assurance, so that none may doubt, that it has no expansionist aspirations." Israel's leaders have repeatedly stated, both inside Israel from the forum of the Knesset (Parliament) and from the platform of the United Nations, that Israel seeks no additional territory but is satisfied with the little that it has. Israel has, furthermore, repeatedly proposed to its Arab neighbors the signing of formal peace treaties or, failing this, nonaggression pacts to be ratified by the United Nations. If Arab leaders were really sincere in their fears of Israel expansionism and not merely using alleged fears as a means of strengthening their hold over their unhappy peoples, they would surely be anxious to sign such pacts, which would ensure their defense against attack.

The article on the Arab refugees refers to one paragraph of a fifteen-paragraph resolution of the UN General Assembly passed in 1948. This, significantly enough, is the only paragraph that Arab spokesmen appear intent on keeping alive, for obvious reasons—it refers to the Arab refugees, while the other paragraphs of that same resolution look forward toward means of achieving formal peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors. But this same paragraph, passed in 1948 when Israel and Arab representatives were negotiating an armistice agreement that it was thought at that time would speedily be followed by a peace treaty, also delimits the refugees who could be considered for repatriation. It refers only to those refugees "wishing to return and live at peace with their

neighbors," and furthermore states that their return should be effected "only when practicable." Since that time, UN officials have reported that refugee adults and children have been systematically taught to hate Israel, to prepare for a return to "an Arab Palestine."

On page 21 in the article "Israel and the Exiles" you state that "we do know, of course, that in 1948 Arabs held 60 per cent of the land that is now Israel. Jews owned about 7 per cent of the land. The remainder, some 30 per cent, was held in the name of the British Crown and became Jewish national property when the mandate was finally abandoned." Although you state that the statistics in this article were taken from *Facts About Israel 1959*, unfortunately, your figures appear to have been transposed. In actual fact, a study of *Survey of Palestine, 1946*, the last statistical publication of the British Mandatory authorities, shows that over 70 per cent of the land of Palestine was Government property (and not 30 per cent as stated by you), with the balance divided between Jewish and Arab owners. Of this Arab-owned land, much still belongs to the original Arab owners who were among the 200,000 Christian and Moslem Arab citizens who remained in Israel.

—*Hugh Y. Orgel, Press Attaché  
Embassy of Israel  
Washington, D.C.*

**Dear Sir:**

It was interesting to read Echoes in the February issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS.

I am not sure whether you kept track of the numbers who applauded

or opposed the "clergybird" cartoons. From the selection printed it would seem that there were more than a few "wet hens" amongst our clerical flock.

These bitter protests against Arthur's caricatures seem to point up needs amongst preachers—insight to admit the humorous side of the prophetic profile and grace to hear the voice of God (even in a cartoon) calling us to improvement in our preaching. It seems inconsistent that those who resented the cartoons because of their threat to the high office of the ministry could at the same time be blind to their potential to aid us in measuring up to that office.

—*Carl L. Nissen  
Seattle, Washington*

**Dear Sir:**

The February issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS is before me. I was glad to read that others besides myself disapprove of the Tom Arthur caricatures; but that is not why I am writing.

Page 4 states that you asked approximately twenty people to reply to an imaginary letter, and that as a result you present this issue—a symposium. My Oxford Dictionary defines a symposium as a "set of contributions on one subject from various authors and points of view."

I gather only one point of view from the articles you have assembled, and I am curious as to whether you received others, which you did not print. Of course we can argue that there is only one point of view, namely, the Christian point of view; but one might argue that it is

not Christian to recognize only one point of view, to be intolerant, to judge, etc. Certainly, by the Oxford definition, you have not given us a symposium!

Much of my feeling on the racial issue is in harmony with your own, I am sure. There are points at which I am also sure we are in variance. In trying to discuss these latter points with individual members of our Presbytery Committee on Social Education and Action—the same Committee whose report consumes four pages of your February issue, I have been dismissed as "crazy," "behind the times," "not knowing what I am talking about."

I hope you will not dismiss me the same way. Is there another side to this picture? Are we moving too fast? Are we taking into consideration the feelings, sentiments, etc., of brethren who are equally Christian? Did you give us a symposium? Believe me, I write in Christian charity toward all men—regardless of color.

—Charles W. Bates  
Berkley, Michigan

Dear Sir:

I have just completed the reading of the February issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS. I firmly believe that it is our failure to answer, as Christians, a more serious question that makes the answer to the interracial question (in all of its aspects, not just the marital one) a confused issue. This question is, "Would you want your daughter or son to marry a non-Christian?"

This question must be answered by all parents NOW, not in some distant future. The Bible is quite

explicit on this question. "Do not be mismatched with unbelievers." True, there are statements about not leaving an unbelieving partner, for the believer may win over the unbeliever. If these statements are taken in both their Biblical and historical context, they point to marriages already contracted.

This is a much more troublesome question to answer. The answer may be that your child cannot marry the child of your best friend. It may even be that the "preacher's" son or daughter is not a fit mate for a Christian. If this question is faced squarely, the other questions of social, economic, and racial backgrounds become minor issues. If we truly believe what we profess to believe, "No one comes to the Father, but by me," and if we are truly concerned about our children's welfare, we must answer this question.

If a boy and girl, both seeking God's will for their lives, wish to marry, they will consider the various problems (both to them and to their children) that may be brought on by their marriage. If they are earnestly seeking God's will, they will not have false feelings of inferiority or superiority because of their "differences," whatever they may be.

Marriage becomes a contract between two equals, made in the image of God, seeking his will for their lives. Such a marriage will last and overcome all obstacles. It is my personal opinion that unless this is the type of contract entered into, it is not marriage in the sight of God, but a simple, legal contract to live together in adultery.

—L. B. Robinson  
Newark, New Jersey

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